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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 000197

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SUBJECT: JORDAN'S ISLAMISTS SEND CONGRATULATORY LETTER TO PRESIDENT, CALL FOR NEW DIALOGUE AND CHANGE FROM BOTH SIDES

Classified By: Ambassador R. Stephen Beecroft for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) Zaki Bani Irsheid, the head of the Muslim Brotherhood-linked Islamic Action Front (IAF) party, sent a letter via the U.S. Embassy to the President on January 21, urging him to be "open to suggestions and willing to debate the political forces that represent the Islamic world." Irsheid publicized the letter to the Jordanian press, which carried the story on inside pages of January 22 editions.

¶2. (C) Comment: The IAF is a small but influential party with an anti-government platform and deep roots in Jordan's Palestinian-origin community. It claims six members in Jordan's 110-seat parliament. Post effectively broke off direct contacts with the IAF and its parent organization, the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood (JMB) sometime around 2002. The IAF was recently active in rallying Jordanian opposition to events in Gaza and is planning a "victory rally" on January 23, which will be reported in more detail septel. Irsheid's public comments about the letter are one more indication that it is seeking to expand its political gains from the events in Gaza. After years of no direct contact with the IAF, it is notable that the group reached out to the new administration. However, given GOJ sensitivities regarding Islamists, we do not intend to respond at this time.

¶3. (U) The following is an unofficial Embassy translation of the Arabic text of the letter, which we will forward per standard correspondence guidelines to the Department with the original:

Mr. Barack Obama
President of the United States of America--Washington

Greetings,

I would like to congratulate you, as I listened carefully to your speech, on the trust the American people bestowed upon you, and do hope that this moment is the one that everyone has been waiting for--the moment of positive change.

I would also like to congratulate the American people for holding on to their freedom, determining their fate, and continuously practicing their rights by choosing who will rule them, this right that has been denied from us in the Islamic World, as we fall victim to domination, dictatorship, violence and favoritism that your predecessor practiced.

Mr. President,

God ordered the Muslim Nation to greet those who extend their hands to greet us.

And since we are civilized human beings, who cooperate when a fair and respected hand is stretched out to us, and since we so long for a world filled with peace, justice, and mutual respect, we look forward to your promise "to change"--the promise that tempted us all and gave us hope for a better

future.

Mr. President,

The talk about friendship between different countries has made us remember the previous government that had promised a world filled with peace and democracy; however it breached its promise and that was clear in Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, Abu Ghraib, and Guantanamo and, recently, Gaza. Also the previous government has supported corruption and blessed it by taking away democracy from the people when they forged the results of the presidential elections in Iraq and when they changed the Palestinian President who was fairly elected--these things we truly wish won't happen again.

Mr. President,

The change that America seeks is a right to all the people and nations. The only obstacle the Muslim world faces is the American policy that favored trading principles with interests. We are seeking to practice our right in choosing for ourselves the style of life that ultimately leads us to happiness.

Mr. President,

The United States of America has struggled with isolation from other countries, especially from Muslim countries, and always wondered "why they hate the United States of America?"

The reason behind this hatred is the arrogant policies and behavior that the U.S. has practiced. Despite all the advertisements and despite the huge budget that was set to

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enhance the image of the U.S., it was the history that didn't serve this cause right. We believe that "Change" is what the American people want and need in order to get out of this global isolation that ruined the lives and the economy of the U.S.

Mr. President,

We are glad that you are determined to change and to declare in front of the whole world that you are willing to do so by saying, "Yes we can." We say to you that we can too and that we are coming.

I would also like to mention that we unanimously believe that the true danger is the Israeli terrorism in Palestine.

The shortest road to make the dreams come true is by being open to suggestions and willing to debate with the political forces that represent the Islamic world.

Finally, we wish you the best of luck in achieving the noble values that will establish civilizations on the planet, which we all share and are partners in building and developing.

Best Regards,
Secretary General

Zaki Bani Irsheid

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Beecroft